

TWO EXCITING REPORTS RELEASED THAT SUPPORT THE WORK OF SECCS:

American Academy of Pediatrics: “Steps towards Quality Early Education and Child Care”

An AAP book titled *The Pediatrician’s Role in Promoting Health and Safety in Child Care* offers a detailed blueprint for pediatricians to take steps to improve the quality of care available to patients and includes specific strategies, activities, and resources that can be used in everyday practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS For each patient, pediatricians are encouraged to:

1. Ask families what care arrangements they have made for their infants and young children and support their efforts. Also, ask parents whether they care for other people’s children in their home.
2. Provide a true medical home for patients and participate in the 3-way partnership with parents and child care providers or early educators.
3. Become familiar with the essential components of quality programs. As trusted family advisors responsible for the well-being of children, know the essential components of quality.
4. Educate families about the benefits of quality programs that aid young children’s safety and development. Using local information, direct families to the resources that will help them locate quality care and help develop strategies to make quality care affordable. (www.aap.org/advocacy/literacypromo.htm) is a resource for pediatricians.

In their communities, pediatricians can

1. Educate policy makers about the science supporting the benefits from quality care and education and, conversely, the lost opportunities and setbacks that occur from poor-quality care. A specific place to start is working within the state to close the gaps between state regulations and the quality standards outlined in *Caring For Our Children*.
2. Work to improve funding and quality early experiences for children and facilitate more action by the national AAP and chapters. Recent national funding and systems to provide quality have been under attack in Congress, and most states’ budget problems have led to decreased support for funding and access to quality care. Programs that have been shown to improve the quality of early experiences for young children, such as early home visiting by nurses and early literacy family programs, need coordinated funding and universal implementation.

National Governors Association (NGA) Task Force on School Readiness Releases FINAL Report

On January 25th, NGA released *Building the Foundation for Bright Futures: Final Report* of the NGA Task Force on School Readiness, to assist governors and other state policymakers in implementing policies and strategies that will support early childhood programs in their states. The task force report outlines a series of recommendations that present the range of what states can do to support the adults who care for children

and the systems that support them. The recommendations will assist governors and other policymakers build a coordinated system and ensure accountability in a collective effort to promote so-called "Ready States, Ready Schools, Ready Communities, Ready Families and Ready Children," including:

- § developing a vision and strategic plan for school readiness that considers the role of families, schools and communities and that addresses the developmental needs of children beginning before birth to kindergarten and beyond;
- § supporting schools, families and communities in facilitating the transition of young children into the kindergarten environment;
- § aligning state early learning standards with K-3 standards;
- § promoting local collaboration and needs assessment for school readiness;
- § seeking community input in statewide planning efforts;
- § supporting parents in their primary role as their children's first teachers;
- § addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse families;
- § ensuring all young children from birth to age five have access to high-quality care and learning opportunities at home and in other settings;
- § providing comprehensive services for infants and toddlers;
- § expanding high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten opportunities for three- and four-year-olds; and
- § addressing the school readiness needs of children in foster care and children with special needs.

Two years of work from the bipartisan NGA Task Force and more than a decade's worth of research support the list of recommendations that were unveiled at the 2005 National "Smart Start Conference" in Greensboro, N.C.

Building the Foundation for Bright Futures: http://www.nga.org/center/divisions/1.1188.C_ISSUE_BRIEF^D_7819.00.html
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On February 14, 2005, the SECCS Steering Committee will meet for the first time to begin the Strategic Planning Process. Watch next month for the outcomes of this meeting.

If you are **not** interested in receiving future updates from the SECCS project, please email me back and I will remove your name. On the other hand, if you are interested in adding additional folks you think would benefit from the updates, please let me know and I will add their names. Your comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please feel free to correspond with me by email wewayne@kern.org or telephone 916 552-8742 or 661 204-8840. Visit the SECCS website at: <http://www.mch.dhs.ca.gov/programs/seccsfacts.htm>